

# **THE SECRET OF THE ROSARY (SELECTIONS)**

**by Saint Louis de Montfort**

MONTFORT PUBLICATIONS, New York

1954

[Edited by Darrell Wright, 2008]

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"Blessed Alan de la Roche says that a nun who had always had great devotion to the Holy Rosary appeared after death to one of her sisters in religion and said to her: 'If I were allowed to go back into my body, to have the chance of saying just one single Hail Mary - even if I said it quickly and without great fervor - I would gladly go through the sufferings that I had during my last illness all over again, in order to gain the merit of this prayer.' (Blessed Alan de la Roche, *De Dignitate Psalterii*, Chapter LXIX) This is all the more compelling because she had been bedridden and had suffered agonizing pains for several years before she died." (St. Louis De Montfort)

Blessed Alan also said: "Let everyone who loves you, oh most holy Mary, listen to this and drink it in:

Whenever I say Hail Mary  
The court of Heaven rejoices  
And the earth is lost in wonderment.  
And I despise the world  
And my heart is brim-full  
Of the love of God  
When I say Hail Mary;  
All my fears wilt and die  
And my passions are subdued  
If I say Hail Mary;  
Devotion grows within me  
And sorrow for sin awakens  
When I say Hail Mary.  
Hope is made strong in my breast  
And the dew of consolation  
Falls on my soul more and more -

Because I say Hail Mary.  
And my spirit rejoices  
And sorrow fades away  
When I say Hail Mary . . ."

## **SECOND ROSE: ORIGIN AND NAME**

SINCE the Holy Rosary is composed, principally and in substance, of the Prayer of Christ and the Angelic Salutation, that is, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, it was without doubt the first prayer and the first devotion of the faithful and has been in use all through the centuries, from the time of the Apostles and disciples down to the present.

But it was only in the year 1214, however, that Holy Mother Church received the Rosary in its present form and according to the method we use today. It was given to the Church by Saint Dominic who had received it from the Blessed Virgin as a powerful means of converting the Albigensians and other sinners.

I will tell you the story of how he received it, which is found in the very well-known book *De Dignitate Psalterii* by Blessed Alan de la Roche. [1] Saint Dominic, seeing that the gravity of people's sins was hindering the conversion of the Albigensians, withdrew into a forest near Toulouse where he prayed unceasingly for three days and three nights. During this time he did nothing but weep and do harsh penances in order to appease the anger of Almighty God. He used his discipline so much that his body was lacerated, and finally he fell into a coma.

At this point Our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by three Angels, and she said:

"Dear Dominic, do you know which weapon the Blessed Trinity wants to use to reform the world?"

"Oh, my Lady," answered Saint Dominic, "you know far better than I do because next to your Son Jesus Christ you have always been the chief instrument of our salvation."

Then Our Lady replied: "I want you to know that, in this kind of warfare, the battering ram has always been the Angelic Psalter [Hail Mary] which is the foundation stone of the New Testament [Cf. Lk 1:28, 42]. Therefore if you want to reach these hardened souls and win them over to God, preach my Psalter."

So he arose, comforted, and burning with zeal for the conversion of the people in that district he made straight for the Cathedral. At once unseen Angels rang the bells to gather the people together and Saint Dominic began to preach.

At the very beginning of his sermon an appalling storm broke out, the earth shook, the sun was darkened, and there was so much thunder and lightning that all were very much afraid. Even greater was their fear when looking at a picture

of Our Lady exposed in a prominent place they saw her raise her arms to Heaven three times to call down God's vengeance upon them if they failed to be converted, to amend their lives, and seek the protection of the Holy Mother of God.

God wished, by means of these supernatural phenomena, to spread the new devotion of the Holy Rosary and to make it more widely known.

At last, at the prayer of Saint Dominic, the storm came to an end, and he went on preaching. So fervently and compellingly did he explain the importance and value of the Holy Rosary that almost all the people of Toulouse embraced it and renounced their false beliefs. In a very short time a great improvement was seen in the town; people began leading Christian lives and gave up their former bad habits.

1. De Dignitate Psalterii. The importance and Beauty of the Holy Rosary, by Blessed Alan de la Roche, O.P., French Dominican Father and Apostle of the Holy Rosary.

### **THIRD ROSE: SAINT DOMINIC**

THIS MIRACULOUS WAY in which the devotion to the Holy Rosary was established is something of a parallel to the way in which Almighty God gave His law to the world on Mount Sinai and obviously proves its value and importance.

Inspired by the Holy Ghost, instructed by the Blessed Virgin as well as by his own experience, Saint Dominic preached the Holy Rosary for the rest of his life. He preached it by his example as well as by his sermons, in cities and in country places, to people of high station and low, before scholars and the uneducated, to Catholics and to heretics.

The Holy Rosary which he said every day was his preparation for every sermon and his little tryst with Our Lady immediately after preaching.

One day he had to preach at Notre Dame in Paris, and it happened to be the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. He was in a little chapel behind the high altar prayerfully preparing his sermon by saying the Rosary, as he always did, when Our Lady appeared to him and said:

"Dominic, even though what you have planned to say may be very good, I am bringing you a much better sermon."

Saint Dominic took in his hands the book Our Lady proffered, read the sermon carefully and when he had understood it and meditated on it, he gave thanks to the Blessed Mother.

When the time came, he went up into the pulpit and, in spite of the feast day, made no mention of Saint John other than to say that he had been

found worthy to be the guardian of the Queen of Heaven. The congregation was made up of theologians and other eminent people who were used to hearing unusual and polished discourses; but Saint Dominic told them that it was not his wish to give them a learned discourse, wise in the eyes of the world, but that he would speak in the simplicity of the Holy Spirit and with His forcefulness.

So he began preaching the Holy Rosary and explained the Hail Mary word by word as he would to a group of children and used the very simple illustrations which were in the book Our Lady had given him.

Carthagera, the great scholar, quoting Blessed Alan de la Roche in *De Dignitate Psalterii*, describes how this took place:

"Blessed Alan writes that one day Father Dominic said to him in a vision: 'My son, it is good to preach; but there is always a danger of looking for praise rather than the salvation of souls. Listen carefully to what happened to me in Paris so that you may be on guard against this kind of mistake: I was to preach in the great church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and I was particularly anxious to give a brilliant sermon, not out of pride, but because of the high intellectual stature of the congregation.

'An hour before the time I had to preach, I was recollectedly saying my Rosary - as I always did before giving a sermon - when I fell into ecstasy. I saw my beloved friend the Mother of God coming towards me with a book in her hand. 'Dominic,' she said, 'your sermon for today may be very good indeed, but no matter how good it is I have brought you one that is very much better.'

'Of course I was overjoyed, took the book and read every word of it. Just as Our Lady had said, I found exactly the right things to say in my sermon, so I thanked her with all my heart.

'When it was time to begin, I saw that the University of Paris had turned out in full force as well as a large number of noblemen. They had all seen and heard of the great things that the good Lord had been doing through me. So I went up into the pulpit.

'It was the feast of Saint John the Apostle but all I said about him was that he had been found worthy to be the guardian of the Queen of Heaven. Then I addressed the congregation:

" 'My Lords and illustrious Doctors of the University, you are accustomed to hearing learned sermons suited to your aesthetic tastes. Now I do not want to speak to you in the scholarly language of human wisdom but, on the contrary, to show you the Spirit of God and His Greatness.' "

Here ends the quotation from Blessed Alan, after which Carthagera goes on to say in his own words:

"Then Saint Dominic explained the Angelic Salutation to them, using simple comparisons and examples from everyday life."

Blessed Alan, according to Carthagera, mentioned several other times when Our Lord and Our Lady appeared to Saint Dominic to urge and inspire him to preach the Rosary more and more in order to wipe out sin and to convert sinners and heretics.

In another passage Carthagera says:

"Blessed Alan said Our Lady revealed to him that after she had appeared to Saint Dominic, her Blessed Son appeared to him and said:

'Dominic, I rejoice to see that you are not relying upon your own wisdom and that, rather than seek the empty praise of men, you are working with great humility for the salvation of souls.

'But many priests want to preach thunderously against the worst kinds of sin at the very outset, failing to realize that before a sick person is given bitter medicine he needs to be prepared by being put in the right frame of mind to really benefit by it.

"This is why, before doing anything else, priests should try to kindle a love of prayer in people's hearts and especially a love of my Angelic Psalter. If only they would all start saying it and would really persevere, God, in His mercy, could hardly refuse to give them His grace. So I want you to preach my Rosary.' "

In another place Blessed Alan says: "All priests say a Hail Mary with the faithful before preaching, to ask for God's grace. They do this because of a revelation that Saint Dominic had from Our Lady. 'My son,' she said one day 'do not be surprised that your sermons fail to bear the results you had hoped for. You are trying to cultivate a piece of ground which has not had any rain. Now when Almighty God planned to renew the face of the earth He started by sending down rain from Heaven - and this was the Angelic Salutation. In this way God made over the world.

'So when you give a sermon, urge people to say my Rosary, and in this way your words will bear much fruit for souls.'

"Saint Dominic lost no time in obeying, and from then on he exerted great influence by his sermons."

This last quotation is from the Book of Miracles of the Holy Rosary (written in Italian) and it is also to be found in Justin's works (143d Sermon).

I have been very glad to quote these well-known authors word for word in the original Latin [1] for benefit of any priests or other learned people

who might otherwise have doubts as to the marvelous power of the Holy Rosary.

As long as priests followed Saint Dominic's example and preached devotion to the Holy Rosary, piety and fervor thrived throughout the Christian world and in those religious orders which were devoted to the Rosary. But since people have neglected this gift from Heaven, all kinds of sin and disorder have spread far and wide.

1. We have omitted the Latin quotations so as to not encumber the text. English translations have been given above.

#### **FOURTH ROSE: BLESSED ALAN DE LA ROCHE**

ALL THINGS, even the holiest, are subject to change, especially when they are dependent on man's free will. It is hardly to be wondered at, then, that the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary only retained its fervor for one century after it was instituted by Saint Dominic. After this, it was like a thing buried and forgotten.

Doubtless, too, the wicked scheming and jealousy of the devil were largely responsible for getting people to neglect the Holy Rosary, and thus block the flow of God's grace which it had drawn down upon the world.

Thus, in 1349, God punished the whole of Europe and sent the most terrible plague that had ever been known into every land. It started first in the east and spread throughout Italy, Germany, France, Poland and Hungary, bringing desolation wherever it came - for out of hundred men hardly one lived to tell the tale. Big towns, little towns, villages and monasteries were almost completely deserted during the three years that the epidemic lasted.

This scourge of God was quickly followed by two others: the heresy of the Flagellantes and a tragic schism in 1376.

[Note: The Flagellantes were members of a group who, naked to the waist, used the discipline of self-flagellation most extremely. In the beginning, they were not in actual error; but in course of time they declared that no one could receive the forgiveness of his sins, unless he entered their confraternity; and although laymen, they confessed and absolved one another. They passed from Italy to Germany, and from that to Hungary. They were condemned at Paris, 1349.]

Later on when these trials were over, thanks to the mercy of God, Our Lady told Blessed Alan to revive the ancient Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary. Blessed Alan was one of the Dominican Fathers from the monastery at Dinan, in Brittany. He was an eminent theologian and was famous for his sermons. Our Lady chose him because, since the Confraternity had originally been started in this province, it was most fitting that a

Dominican from the very same province should have the honor of re-establishing it.

Blessed Alan began this great work in 1460 after a special warning from Our Lord. This is how he received His urgent message, as he tells it himself:

One day when he was saying Mass, Our Lord, Who wished to spur him on to preach the Holy Rosary, spoke to him in the Sacred Host:

"How can you crucify Me again so soon?" Jesus said.

"What did You say, Lord?" asked Blessed Alan, horrified.

"You crucified Me once before by your sins," answered Jesus, "and I would willingly be crucified again rather than have My Father offended by the sins you used to commit. You are crucifying Me again now because you have all the learning and understanding that you need to preach My Mother's Rosary, and you are not doing so. If you only did this you could teach many souls the right path and lead them away from sin - but you are not doing it and so you yourself are guilty of the sins that they commit."

This terrible reproach made Blessed Alan solemnly resolve to preach the Rosary unceasingly.

Our Lady too spoke to him one day to inspire him to preach the Holy Rosary more and more:

"You were a great sinner in your youth," she said, "but I obtained the grace of your conversion from my Son. Had such a thing been possible I would have liked to have gone through all kinds of suffering to save you because converted sinners are a glory to me. And I would have done this also to make you worthy of preaching my Rosary far and wide."

Saint Dominic appeared to Blessed Alan as well and told him of the great results of his ministry: he had preached the Holy Rosary unceasingly, his sermons had borne great fruit and many people had been converted during his missions. He said to Blessed Alan:

"See the wonderful results I have had through preaching the Holy Rosary! You and all those who love Our Lady ought to do the same so that, by means of this holy practice of the Rosary, you may draw all people to the real science of the virtues."

Briefly, then, this is the history of how Saint Dominic established the Holy Rosary and of how Blessed Alan de la Roche restored it.

## **NINTH ROSE: ENEMIES**

IT IS VERY WICKED indeed and unfair to other souls to hinder the progress

of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. Almighty God has severely punished many of those who have been so benighted as to scorn the Confraternity and who have sought to destroy it.

Even though God has set His seal of approval on the Holy Rosary by many miracles, and in spite of the Papal Bulls that have been written approving it, there are only too many people who are against the Holy Rosary today. These freethinkers and those who scorn religion either condemn the Rosary or try to turn others away from it.

It is easy to see that they have absorbed the poison of Hell and that they are inspired by the devil - for nobody can condemn devotion to the Holy Rosary without condemning all that is most holy in the Catholic Faith, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Angelic Salutation and the mysteries of the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ and of His Holy Mother.

These freethinkers who cannot bear others to say the Rosary often fall into a really heretical state of mind without even realizing it and some to hate the Rosary and its holy mysteries.

To have a loathing for confraternities is to fall away from God and true piety, for Our Lord Himself has told us that He is always in the midst of those who are gathered together in His name. No good Catholic should forget the many great indulgences which Holy Mother Church has granted to Confraternities. Finally, to dissuade others from joining the Rosary Confraternity is to be an enemy of souls because the Rosary is a sure means of curing oneself of sin and of embracing a Christian life.

Saint Bonaventure said (in his Psalter) that whoever neglected Our Lady would perish in his sins and would be damned: "He who neglects her will die in his sins." If such is the penalty for neglecting her, what must be the punishment in store for those who actually turn others away from their devotions!

## **TENTH ROSE: MIRACLES**

WHILE SAINT DOMINIC was preaching the Rosary in Carcassone, a heretic made fun of the miracles and the fifteen mysteries of the Holy Rosary, and this prevented other heretics from being converted. As a punishment God allowed fifteen thousand devils to enter the man's body.

His parents took him to Father Dominic to be delivered from the evil spirits. He started to pray and begged everyone who was there to say the Rosary out loud with him, and at each Hail Mary Our Lady drove one hundred devils out of the heretic's body and they came out in the form of red hot coals.

After he had been delivered he abjured his former errors, was converted and joined the Rosary Confraternity. Several of his associates did the



same, having been greatly moved by his punishment and by the power of the Rosary.

The learned Franciscan, Carthagera, as well as several other authors, says that an extraordinary event took place in 1482: The Venerable James Sprenger and other religious of his order were zealously working to re-establish devotion to the Holy Rosary and also to erect a Confraternity in the city of Cologne.

Unfortunately two priests who were famous for their preaching ability were jealous of the great influence they were exerting through preaching the Rosary. So these two Fathers spoke against this devotion whenever they had a chance, and as they were very eloquent and had a great reputation they persuaded many people not to join the Confraternity.

One of them, bound and determined to achieve his wicked end, wrote a special sermon against the Rosary and planned to give it the following Sunday. But when it came time for the sermon he never appeared and, after a certain amount of waiting somebody went to fetch him. He was found dead, and evidently had died all alone without anyone to help him and without seeing a priest.

After convincing himself that death had been due to natural causes, the other priest decided to carry out his friend's plan and to give a similar sermon on another day. In this way he hoped to put an end to the Confraternity of the Rosary. However, when the day came for him to preach and it was time to give the sermon God punished him by striking him down with paralysis which deprived him both of the use of his limbs and of his power of speech.

At last he admitted his sin and likewise that of his friend and immediately, in his heart of hearts, he silently besought Our Lady to help him. He promised her that if she would only cure him he would preach the Holy Rosary with as much zeal as that with which he had formerly fought against it. For this end he implored her to restore his health and speech which she did, and finding himself instantaneously cured he rose up like another Saul, a persecutor turned defender of the Holy Rosary. He publicly acknowledged his former error and ever after preached the wonders of the Most Holy Rosary with great zeal and eloquence.

I am quite sure that freethinkers and ultra-critical people of today will question the truth of the stories in this little book, in the very same way that they have always questioned most things, but all that I have done has been to copy them from very good contemporary writers and also, in part, from a book that was written only a short time ago: The Mystical Rose Tree, by the Reverend Antonin Thomas, O.P.

Everyone knows that there are three different kinds of faith by which we believe different kinds of stories:  
To stories of Holy Scripture we owe Divine faith;

To stories concerning other than religious subjects, which do not militate against common sense and which are written by trustworthy authors, we pay the tribute of human faith; whereas

To stories about holy subjects which are told by good authors and are not in the slightest degree contrary to reason, faith or morals (even though they may sometimes deal with happenings which are above the ordinary run of events) we pay the tribute of pious faith.

I agree that we must be neither too credulous nor too critical and that we should remember that "virtue takes the middle course" - keeping a happy medium in all things in order to find just where truth and virtue lie. But on the other hand I know equally well that charity easily leads us to believe all that is not contrary to faith or morals: "Charity . . . believeth all things;" [1] in the same way pride induces us to doubt even well authenticated stories on the plea that they are not to be found in the Bible.

This is one of the devil's traps; heretics of the past who denied Tradition have fallen into it and over-critical people of today are falling into it too without even realizing it.

People of this kind refuse to believe what they do not understand or what is not to their liking, simply because of their own spirit of pride and independence.

1. 1 Cor. 13:7.

## **SIXTEENTH ROSE: THE HAIL MARY - BEAUTY**

....One day when Saint Mechtilde was praying and was trying to think of some way in which she could express her love of the Blessed Mother better than she had done before, she fell into ecstasy. Our Lady appeared to her with the Angelic Salutation in flaming letters of gold upon her bosom and said to her: "My daughter, I want you to know that no one can please me more than by saying the salutation which the Most Adorable Trinity sent to me and by which He raised me to the dignity of Mother of God.

"By the word Ave (which is the name Eve, Eva), I learned that in His infinite power God had preserved me from all sin and its attendant misery which the first woman had been subject to.

"The name Mary which means 'lady of light' shows that God has filled me with wisdom and light, like a shining star, to light up Heaven and earth.

"The words full of grace remind me that the Holy Spirit has showered so many graces upon me that I am able to give these graces in abundance to those who ask for them through me as Mediatrix.

"When people say The Lord is with thee they renew the indescribable joy that was mine when the Eternal Word became incarnate in my womb.

"When you say to me blessed art thou among women I praise Almighty God's Divine mercy which lifted me to this exalted plane of happiness.

"And at the words blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, the whole of Heaven rejoices with me to see my Son Jesus Christ adored and glorified for having saved mankind."

## **SEVENTEENTH ROSE: THE HAIL MARY - -FRUITS**

Blessed Alan De La Roche, who was so deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin, had many revelations from her and we know that he confirmed the truth of these revelations by a solemn oath. Three of them stand out with special emphasis: the first, that if people fail to say the Hail Mary (the Angelic Salutation which has saved the world) out of carelessness, or because they are lukewarm, or because they hate it, this is a sign that they will probably and indeed shortly be condemned to eternal punishment.

The second truth is that those who love this Divine salutation bear the very special stamp of predestination [of going to heaven].

The third is that those to whom God has given the signal grace of loving Our Lady and of serving her out of love must take very great care to continue to love and serve her until the time when she shall have had them placed in heaven by her divine Son in the degree of glory which they have earned. (Blessed Alan, chapter XI, paragraph 2)

The heretics, all of whom are children of the devil and clearly bear the sign of God's reprobation, have a horror of the Hail Mary. They still say the Our Father but never the Hail Mary; they would rather wear a poisonous snake around their necks than wear a scapular or carry a rosary.

Among Catholics those who bear the mark of God's reprobation think but little of the rosary (whether that of five decades or fifteen). They either fail to say it or only say it very quickly and in a lukewarm manner.

Even if I did not believe that which has been revealed to Blessed Alan de la Roche, even then my own experience would be enough to convince me of this terrible but consoling truth. I do not know, nor do I see clearly, how it can be that a devotion which seems to be so small can be the infallible sign of eternal salvation and how its absence can be the sign of God's eternal displeasure; nevertheless, nothing could possibly be more true.

....My Hail Mary, my Rosary of fifteen or of five decades, is the prayer and the infallible touchstone by which I can tell those who are led by the Spirit of God from those who are deceived by the devil. I have known souls who seemed to soar like eagles to the heights by their sublime contemplation and who yet were pitifully led astray by the devil. I only found out

how wrong they were when I learned that they scorned the Hail Mary and the Rosary which they considered as being far beneath them.

The Hail Mary is a blessed dew that falls from Heaven upon the souls of the predestinate. It gives them a marvelous spiritual fertility so that they can grow in all virtues. The more the garden of the soul is watered by this prayer the more enlightened one's intellect becomes, the more zealous his heart, and the stronger his armor against his spiritual enemies....

### **THIRTY-THIRD ROSE: A DIABOLICAL POSSESSION**

WHEN SAINT DOMINIC was preaching the Rosary near Carcassone [1] an Albigensian was brought to him who was possessed by the devil. Saint Dominic exorcised him in the presence of a great crowd of people; it appears that over twelve thousand had come to hear him preach. The devils who were in possession of this wretched man were forced to answer Saint Dominic's questions in spite of themselves. They said that:

1. There were fifteen thousand of them in the body of this poor man, because he had attacked the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary;
2. They went on to testify that by preaching the Rosary he put fear and horror into the very depths of Hell and that he was the man they hated most throughout the whole world, because of the souls which he snatched from them through devotion to the Holy Rosary;
3. They then revealed several other things.

Saint Dominic put his Rosary around the Albigensian's neck and asked the devils to tell him who, of all the Saints in Heaven, was the one they feared the most, and who should therefore be the most loved and revered by men. At this they let out such unearthly screams that most of the people fell to the ground, faint from fear. Then, using all their cunning, so as not to answer, the devils wept and wailed in such a pitiful way that many of the people wept also, out of purely natural pity. The devils spoke through the mouth of the Albigensian, pleading in a heartrending voice:

"Dominic, Dominic, have mercy on us - we promise you that we will never hurt you. You have always had compassion for sinners and those in distress; have pity on us, for we are in grievous straits. We are suffering so very much already, so why do you delight in heightening our pains? Can't you be satisfied with our suffering without adding to it? Have pity on us! Have pity on us!"

Saint Dominic was not one whit moved by the pathos of these wretched spirits and told them that he would not let them alone until they had answered his question. Then they said they would whisper the answer in such a way that only Saint Dominic would be able to hear. The latter firmly insisted upon their answering clearly and out loud. Then the devils

kept quiet and refused to say another word, completely disregarding Saint Dominic's orders - so he knelt down and prayed thus to Our Lady: "Oh, all powerful and wonderful Virgin Mary, I implore you by the power of the Most Holy Rosary, order these enemies of the human race to answer me."

No sooner had he made this prayer than a glowing flame leaped out of the ears, nostrils and mouth of the Albigensian. Everyone shook with fear, but the fire did not hurt anyone. Then the devils cried:

"Dominic, we beseech you, by the passion of Jesus Christ and by the merits of His Holy Mother and of all the Saints, let us leave the body of this man without speaking further - for the Angels will answer your question whenever you wish. After all, are we not liars? So why should you want to believe us? Please don't torture us any more; have pity on us."

"Woe unto you wretched spirits, who do not deserve to be heard," Saint Dominic said, and kneeling down he prayed to Our Lady:

"Oh most worthy Mother of Wisdom, I am praying for the people assembled here who have already learned how to say the Angelic Salutation properly. Please, I beg of you, force your enemies to proclaim the whole truth and nothing but the truth about this, here and now, before the multitude."

Saint Dominic had hardly finished this prayer when he saw the Blessed Virgin near at hand, surrounded by a multitude of Angels. She struck the possessed man with a golden rod that she held and said: "Answer my servant Dominic at once." (Remember, the people neither saw nor heard Our Lady, but only Saint Dominic.) Then the devils started screaming:

"Oh you who are our enemy, our downfall and our destruction, why have you come from Heaven just to torture us so grievously? O Advocate of sinners, you who snatch them from the very jaws of Hell, you who are the very sure path to Heaven, must we, in spite of ourselves, tell the whole truth and confess before everyone who it is who is the cause of our shame and our ruin? Oh woe unto us, princes of darkness:

"Then listen well, you Christians: the Mother of Jesus Christ is all-powerful and she can save her servants from falling into Hell. She is the Sun which destroys the darkness of our wiles and subtlety. It is she who uncovers our hidden plots, breaks our snares and makes our temptations useless and ineffectual.

"We have to say, however reluctantly, that not a single soul who has really persevered in her service has ever been damned with us; one single sigh that she offers to the Blessed Trinity is worth far more than all the prayers, desires and aspirations of all the Saints.

"We fear her more than all the other Saints in Heaven together and we have no success with her faithful servants. Many Christians who call upon her when they are at the hour of death and who really ought to be damned

according to our ordinary standards are saved by her intercession.

"Oh if only that Mary (it is thus in their fury that they called her) had not pitted her strength against ours and had not upset our plans, we should have conquered the Church and should have destroyed it long before this; and we would have seen to it that all the Orders in the Church fell into error and disorder.

"Now that we are forced to speak we must also tell you this: nobody who perseveres in saying the Rosary will be damned, because she obtains for her servants the grace of true contrition for their sins and by means of this they obtain God's forgiveness and mercy."

Then Saint Dominic had them all say the Rosary very slowly and with great devotion, and a wonderful thing happened: at each Hail Mary that he and the people said together a large group of devils issued forth from the wretched man's body under the guise of red-hot coals.

When the devils had all been expelled and the heretic was at last entirely free of them, Our Lady (who was still invisible) gave her blessing to the assembled company, and they were filled with joy because of this.

A large number of heretics were converted because of this miracle and joined the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary.

1. This incident is referred to by Saint Louis in his "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary" when he explains that those who love Our Lady are not lost. Cf. paragraph 42.

### **THIRTY-SIXTH ROSE: FREED FROM SATAN**

IN 1578 A WOMAN in Anvers had given herself to the devil and had signed the contract with her own blood. Shortly afterwards she was stricken with sincere remorse and had an intense desire to make amends for this terrible deed. So she sought out a kind and wise confessor who advised her to go to Father Henry, one of the Fathers of the Dominican Friary, who was Director of the Rosary Confraternity in that town, to ask him to enroll her in it and hear her confession.

Accordingly she went to ask for him but met, not Father Henry, but the devil disguised as a Dominican Father. The latter scolded her pitilessly and said that she could never hope to receive Almighty God's grace again as long as she lived, and that there was absolutely no way in which she could regain possession of her contract. This grieved her greatly but she did not quite lose hope of God's mercy and sought out Father Henry once more, only to find the devil a second time, and to meet with a second rebuff. She came back for the third time and then at last, by Divine Providence, she found Father Henry in person - the priest whom she had been looking for - and he treated her with very great kindness, urging

her to throw herself upon the mercy of Almighty God and to make a good confession. He then received her into the Confraternity and told her to say the Rosary frequently.

One day while Father Henry was saying Mass for her Our Lady forced the devil to give her back the contract which she had signed. In this way she was delivered from the devil by the authority of Mary and by her devotion to the Most Holy Rosary.

[www.catholictradition.org/Classics/secret-rosary3.htm](http://www.catholictradition.org/Classics/secret-rosary3.htm)